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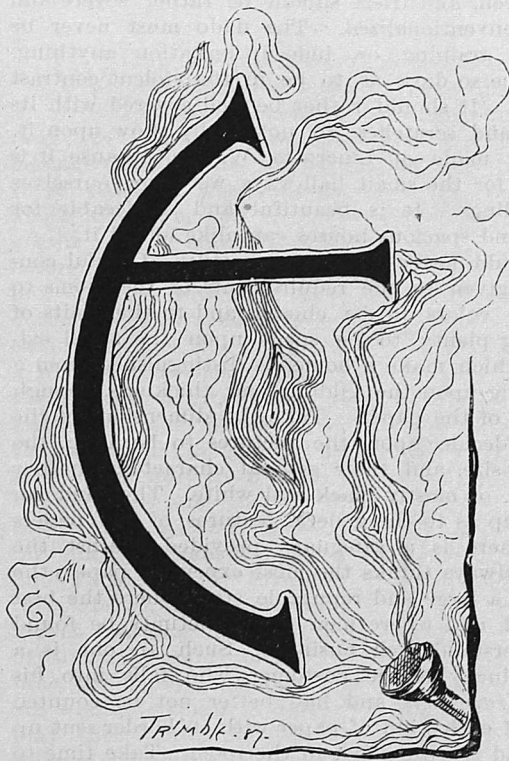
THE DECORATOR AND FURNISHER.

ABOUT WALLS AND WALL PAPERS.

BY

MARION FOSTER
WASHBURN.

II. IN PARTICULAR, WITH A WORD ABOUT CEILINGS.



ACH person must decide for himself as to the character he will give his parlor, and its papering, as well as its other fittings, should be in keeping with this character. If it is to be a mere formal reception room, its papering may properly be quite decorative, as it is not likely to have

many pictures set against it, while at the same time its coloring may well be rich and its pattern bold, though always conventionalized. Of course for a small room the design must be smaller than for a large one, but a free design adds much to the furnishing of an otherwise rather bare apartment. If, on the contrary, the parlor is to be the living room, the paper should be quiet in tone, though quite rightly richer in quality than those in the more work-a-day rooms. It should supply a becoming background to the pictures, casts and other household idols that gather where the family gathers. If it be used during the daytime by young and old alike, the paper can well be covered with some small design, so that it may not show soil too readily. It need not necessarily be dark to accomplish this purpose, and most dark hangings make a room gloomy. Dark papers with scrappy dabs of gilt are hideous, and not to be tolerated. Where the room is used only in the evening by the family, the walls may safely be more delicate, and be chosen with a view to their appearance by gaslight.

Great caution is required in the use of gilt. The cheap papers are generally bad. In them the gilt is put on in little patches without any meaning—a line of it an inch long here, an absurd polka dot there. It serves only to unnecessarily increase the price of the paper. It is difficult to give rules for choosing gilded papers, because designs where gold is rightly used are rare, but very lovely. In its right place gold has an appearance of delicate richness all its own, but this right place is dangerously near the wrong place, where it at once shows tawdry and theatrical. One rule may be regarded as safe. Gold artistically employed never occupies too prominent a position, but is used to add richness to the design, so that the paper pleases by its beauty, not its costliness.

Dados have been abandoned, except for the dining-room and halls. This is in recognition of the fact that the quantity of furniture in the living and sleeping parts of the house interferes with the continuity of the dado. An elaborate decoration is not to be wasted behind furniture. In a well filled room there is certainly not enough of the first four feet of the wall left visible to justify separate treatment. In the hall there is usually very little furniture, and a long stretch of wall whose monotony must be broken as much as possible. In the dining-room also there is comparatively little furniture against the walls when the family are at table, and the dado has space to be beautiful.

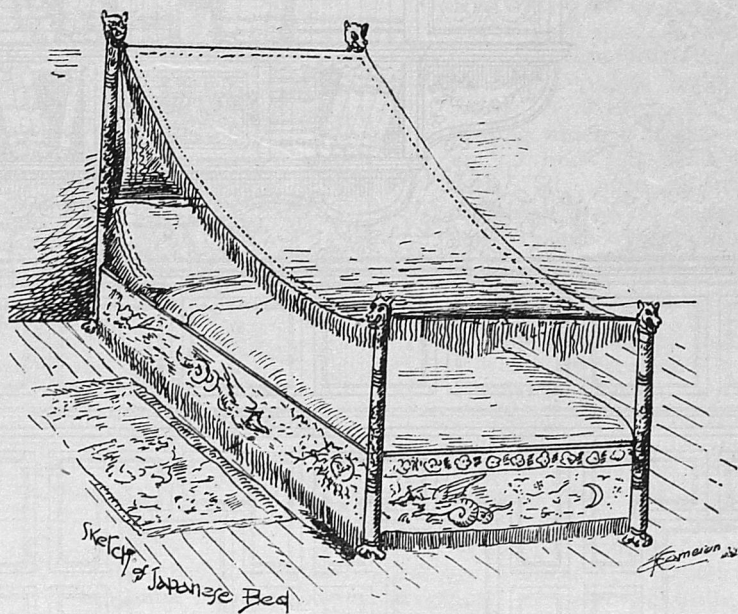
The massive style of dining-room furnishing has almost gone by, and had certainly better not be attempted by people of small means, living in small houses. A meal is, or ought to be, a cheerful occasion, a "tri-daily festival," as Marion Harland puts it, and the room set apart for it ought naturally to be festive. Sunshine is desirable, but too often wanting, and where it is lacking the bright tints of the walls should be made to compensate as far as possible. The gorgeous metallic papers are quite in place here, but they must not be too gorgeous. As with gold, all metals should be used with discretion. It is easy for them to become offensive. But in a dining-room a full scale of color may be adopted with much less fear of consequences, and when well chosen will be in very agreeable contrast to the modesty of the other hangings of the house. Americans are said to be "afraid of color," a reproach which, I fancy, applies after all very much more to the better educated classes.

A basement dining-room is not a beautiful apartment, and

can scarcely be made so. The most that can be done is to make it agreeable, and, if possible, cheerful. A gorgeous paper would be out of keeping both with the lowly situation of the room itself and its lowly ceiling. A short wall cannot be very decorative and ought to retire modestly, but with a sunny face, into the background. Pale yellow is a very good color for these dark rooms, and the pattern of the paper should be small and inconspicuous. The frieze should be narrow, not more than eight inches in width, so as not to lower the already abbreviated walls. Among pictures, landscapes, especially those with the sunshine on them, may appropriately hang here, and shelves of bright glass and china be placed to catch and reflect the light.

The first requisite of a bedroom paper is restfulness. The bedroom is for repose, not active living, so that the larger designs of the parlor and dining-room should here be abandoned. Gilt also, and silver, and all the metallic colorings may be wisely omitted. In masses they are too magnificent, in little sparkles, too distracting. The eye follows them about and is wearied. A simple and inexpensive paper, soft in coloring, with a small set pattern, will be found satisfactory. The tinting should be very subdued, two shades of the same color being recommended by Eastlake. But this seems rather unnecessarily limited in range and Quakerish. It is desirable to have less contrast than harmony, and at most three or four tints however delicate. The frieze also should be quiet, with a larger, flowing pattern, and when the bedroom is too high and narrow, as it often is, a broad frieze is indicated. This can be managed at a small expense by running a strip of ordinary wall paper—not that designed for friezes—horizontally around the top of the room, separating it from the wall screen by a plain picture molding, and finishing the upper edge with a two or three inch border. If there be no picture molding, this strip may also define the lower edge. It should be darker than either the strip it borders, or the main paper, but not too much darker. Where so wide a border is not required, half the width of paper may be used, with excellent results. Sometimes half a breadth of ingrain paper of a solid tint to harmonize with the principle shade of the papering, is put next the ceiling, with a picture molding or narrow border on its lower edge. It has nothing on its upper edge. This is particularly good in rooms where there is no plaster molding and no ceiling paper, as it softens the transition from the diversified wall to the plain ceiling.

Speaking of papered ceilings, a word of warning may not be out of place. The so-called ceiling papers are a snare for the unwary. Meaningless designs and tasteless colorings vie with each other. Stars and wheels and eccentric orbits shine out in gilded glory. Spirals and cobwebs shimmer in silver, little crooked lines wander here and there over the otherwise vacant spaces. Triangles, circles and squares embrace polygons of all descriptions in a mathematical frenzy. Astronomy, geometry and highly idealized spiders fraternize together. *Cui bono?* Such a design is not pretty or useful, and succeeds only in being a distraction and a puzzle. If one has to have papers of this sort, the best place for them is certainly the ceiling, where they are least often looked upon. But who does not pity the master of the house, who, tired with his day's toil, lays his weary head upon the sofa pillow and looks upward, as we all do, for rest and refreshment? He sees, for his comfort, wheels and whirligigs, gyrating and coiling and hiding one behind another, this one with a corner chopped off by way of variety, this other one more than half in eclipse, all crowding and pushing and thrusting themselves upon his notice. Interested he cannot help being,



A JAPANESE BED, BY T. CARLYLE CAMERON.

Posts of walnut or cherry, canopy of light blue silk, sides of dark red, with gold and light blue relievings. Cocoanut matting in lieu of head board.

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but how profitless is his interest and how confused his tired head!

In truth, the similitude of motion, circular, wheeling motion of some of these papers is surprising, and it is comforting to reflect that the worst of them are usually the most expensive. A ceiling paper should be even quieter than the wall paper, and lighter in tint, with a small set pattern. It ought to cover the ceiling, without the distraction of borders, which few rooms are large enough to stand, and *not* be chopped into corners and centre pieces. The effort should be to diversify the bareness of calcimine, and to make an agreeable surface for the eye to rest upon. Machine-made paper should never be too decorative, or attempt to take the place of the rich frescoes of the Old World.

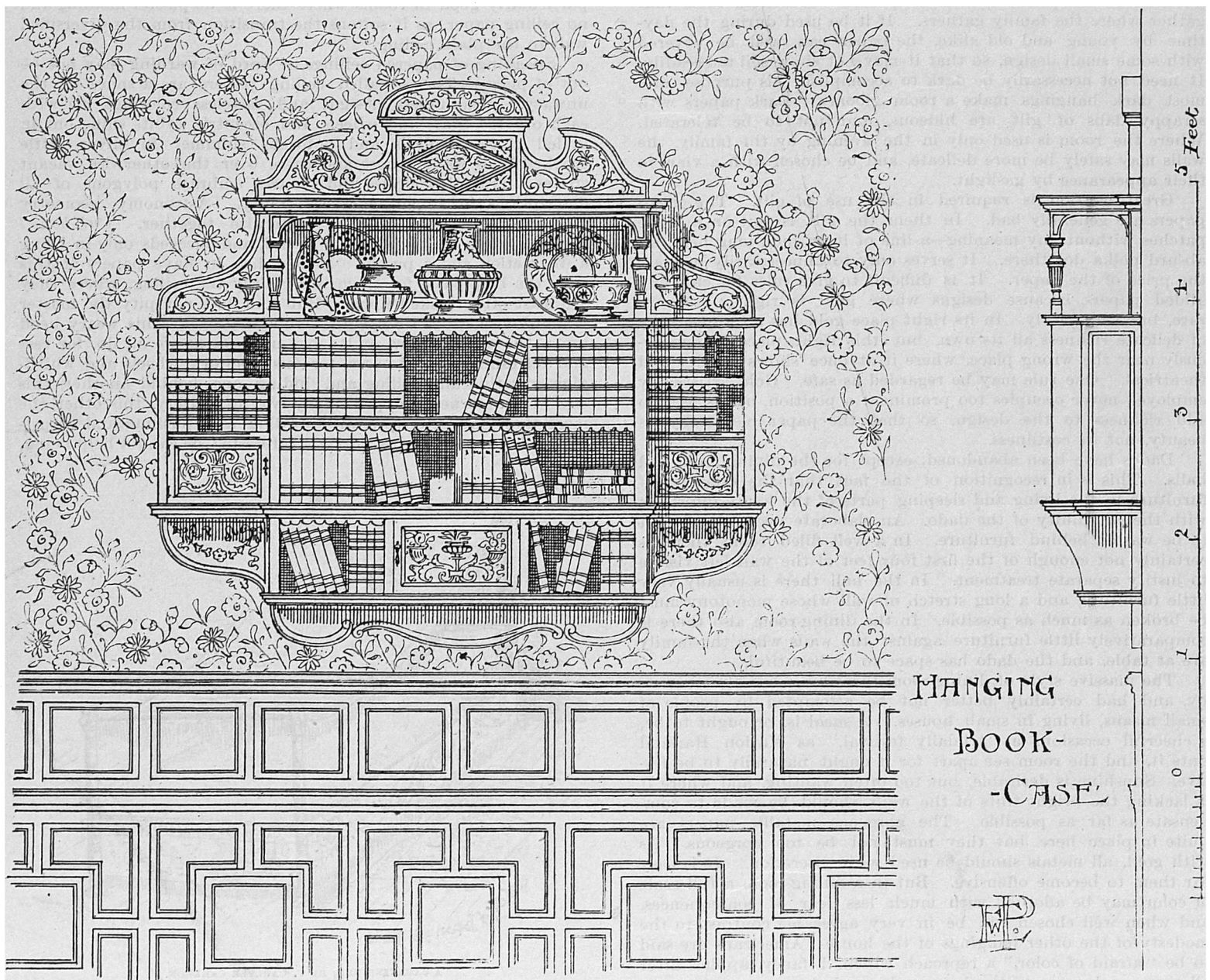
Excellent papers for the bath-room are the glazed tile papers, which come for this purpose. They are impervious to moisture, and therefore are at once hygienic and cleanly. They last a very long time, and when soiled can be washed with soap and water, like a hard finished wall. This permits the use of light colors, which is of advantage in our small bath-rooms, as it adds to the appearance of space. These papers, ready prepared, are quite expensive, being a dollar a roll, but a substitute having all the advantages of the original can be had for fifteen cents a roll. These cheaper goods come in just the same patterns and colors, and when properly hung look just the same. They are used without any bordering, and cover walls and ceiling, from the wooden dado or splasher. They should be sized all over, after hanging, and then covered with a coat of transparent varnish. Of course, this adds somewhat to the cost, but it also adds very much to the durability, and when all is told, the price would not, I think, amount to much more than twenty-five cents a roll.

A word, in parting, about the hall. Here a dado is very desirable, and rather a high one, so that the hands of children and servants may not leave a solid streak all down the sides of the stairway. The paper should be pale, and in most houses it had best be quite pale, to catch the few rays of light that find their way thither. The upper border ought not to be too wide. A two band frieze is all that is required. The patterns of all

three, dado, wall screen, and frieze should be rather severe and dignified, strongly conventionalized. The dado must never be imitation marble or graining, or, indeed, imitation anything. Neither ought it to be so dark as to be in too violent contrast with the wall screen. It should rather be well covered with its pattern, so that soil and scratches do not easily show upon it. No mention is here made of Lincrusta Walton, because it is usually too gorgeous for the small hall-ways we allow ourselves in our ordinary dwellings. It is beautiful and serviceable for those whose purses and spacious houses can alike afford it.

A wall paper should never be chosen hastily. Careful consideration should be given to the requirements of the rooms to be decorated, to the colors to be chosen, and to the limits of one's finances, leaving plenty to be spent upon the small evidences of culture which make a home, as distinguished from a hotel, and economizing upon the gilding and thickness, though not upon the design, of the paper. Take the dimensions of the rooms carefully and decide upon the pictures to be hung, the number of them, the size, and their general character, whether in oil or water colors, or mostly black and white. The mind can be thus quite made up as to the general features of the papers to be bought, and there is a safeguard provided against the plausible clerk who always thinks the most expensive papers the best. Finally, go to a large and reputable store where the best designs are to be had, and where men can sometimes be found who thoroughly understand their business. Such an one is a blessing indeed, and lucky is the customer who falls into his hands. But he is a *rara avis*, and had better not be counted upon. Have a roll of each kind of paper with its border sent up before purchasing, and try the effect in the room. Take time to decide, and think and read on the subject. There will be ample compensation in the result.

THE DECORATOR AND FURNISHER for July is unusually pleasing. This charming publication has attractions for the artist, the tradesman, and the housekeeper and furnisher second to those of no other periodical of its kind, and is always good, but the last number seems to possess unusual interest.—
The Burlington Hawkeye.



SUGGESTION FOR HANGING BOOKCASE, BY E. W. POLEY, A.R.I.B.A.